

THE CASTLE AT NEWCASTLE.

RESTORATION OF THE CASTLE AT
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THE Norman Castle from which the town of Newcastle-on-Tyne takes its name, is placed on the summit of a piece of land which descends abruptly towards the river Tyne. The ease with which this position could be defended in all save one direction, seems to have recommended it to importance; most probably before the Roman occupation of this country. A bridge was built across the Tyne by one of Hadrian's generals, which gave the name of Pons Ælii to the site of the present town of Newcastle-on-Tyne. This name was changed during the same period to that of Monkchester. The subject of our engraving is the only remaining portion of the Norman Castle which superseded the Saxon buildings. It is generally supposed that the New Castle was erected by Robert, Duke of Normandy, eldest son of William the Conqueror, A.D. 1080. From that period until the reign of James the First the New Castle has held a prominent position in history; for a succession of ages it continued to be the residence of English and at times of Scotch kings, and has been the scene of many stirring and poetical events. The condition of the country no longer requiring the defence of

stone walls, the New Castle was allowed to go rapidly to decay. A writer in the *Newcastle Journal* says:—"We find the incorporated company of tailors farming the castle at a yearly rent. What this worshipful company wanted with the keep of the castle of Newcastle-on-Tyne we cannot imagine; but certain it is, that all idea of military use seems to have been abandoned. In 1614 its roof had become wholly decayed; and Sir John Mairley had it covered with timber, whereon he mounted his cannon. In subsequent years it fell into further disuse; and in 1782 the then owner, advertised it to be let as a mill, which, in the advertisement published on the occasion, is recommended to be erected on the summit! Its eligibility for the purpose of grinding corn, bolting flour, and making it, are feelingly expatiated upon, and there is a happy suggestion, that as there is a good supply of water within the castle, it is rendered a very eligible situation for a brewery or any manufactory which requires a constant supply of water." This barbarous fate was fortunately prevented by the corporation purchasing the castle and making certain repairs, which were, however, not done in the best taste. Since the building has come into the possession of the corporation

it has been used at various times as a prison, an hospital, and a school. The principal portions of the keep of the New Castle are perhaps more perfect than that of any other Norman military edifice remaining in this country; but the beautiful details were rapidly perishing; the rich groining of the chapel was sadly decayed, and the doorway leading to the great hall (seen midway in our engraving) so defaced, that it would not have been possible to restore it had not Mr. Dolson, the architect, fortunately, when a boy, made sketches when the details were in a more perfect state. By the exertions of the Newcastle Society of Antiquaries the corporation has commenced the complete restoration of the keep. The chapel and entrance to the great hall are completed, with the exception of the pavement and windows. It is not yet decided whether the pavement shall be made of ornamental tiles or plain stones. It is proposed to fill the windows with horn. The doorway leading to the great hall is finished, and a small oratory on the same platform is in progress. The battlements which are at present on the castle were placed there forty or fifty years since. It is proposed to expend 250*l.* a-year until all other parts are made perfect.